



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

citizens of any country. When one of them does go in for politics (or revolution, which is the same thing in Mexico) he does more mischief, because above his wicked heart is a cleverer head. He easily becomes the leader of the low-browed, poverty-stricken peon class, and by perfervid appeals to the prejudice of the thoughtless and uneducated mass of Indians and the promise of an impossible Utopia quickly converts them into murderous bandits. Resounding phrases about the Constitution, whether that of 1857 or that of Queretaro, makes no difference—and the rights of the Indians, mixed with contemptuous remarks about the "Gringoes" and the hated "Colossus of the North" soon can make fiends of otherwise quiet and useful men.

Of all people trying to conduct government the Mexican is most in need of wise and firm leaders. Of course it

is perilous to say it at this time when the "uplifter" is abroad in the land, but to the writer (and to most others who know Mexico) it seems essential, if the country is ever to be lifted out of carnage and chaos, to have some such man as Porfirio Diaz at the head of affairs. After fifty-six years of the most chaotic and bloody conditions he did create an orderly and nation-building government, and that is what Mexico must have or perish. Many people who know him hope that such a man has been found in Alvaro Obregon.

These are the people, high and low, from whom thousands of immigrants are coming to the United States. What it may mean for Americans in the future no one can tell. Probably our safety and peace lie in the fact that as yet so few of them, comparatively, are coming.

Immigration Along Our Southwest Border

By J. BLAINE GWIN

Secretary, Associated Charities, El Paso, Texas

PREVIOUS to 1910 the immigration from Mexico was due entirely to economic causes. Laborers came north with their families to work during the summer in the mines and at agricultural work but at the beginning of winter the majority would return to their homeland to spend their wages. In Mexico during that time laborers were paid only about twenty-five cents a day. Public records give only a very faint idea of the number that crossed the border previous to 1910. Little attempt was made to keep track of the ebb and flow of the tide of Mexican laborers.

At the beginning of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, the rush of Aliens to cross over into America constituted

a real menace to the health and standards of living for the border communities. The principal cause of this increased migration was revolutionary rather than economic. The majority of these immigrants remained in the States until about 1915 and since that time there has been a fairly steady stream of returning refugees and laborers. More have returned during the last few months than at any previous period due to the present peaceful conditions in Mexico. Most of these came north with no money and little clothing, sandals (huraches) instead of shoes, wide sombreros, and blankets wrapped around them instead of coats. They are returning with rolls of money, often several hundred dol-

lars, with good suitcases in their hands and most of them are dressed in the dearly-loved blue suits.

The return of peaceful conditions in Mexico will be sufficient to induce the return of Mexican business men or those owning mining property and haciendas, but a peaceful Mexico with little or no increase in wages will not be sufficient to interfere in any way with the migration of laborers to this country. The border states are competing with Mexico for these laborers and Mexico is not yet in a position to offer sufficient inducement to keep her workers at home, much as they are needed there to help rebuild the farms and industries. Labor in Mexico receives from fifty to seventy-five cents a day (American gold), and in the beet fields of this country, in the mines and in construction work they are getting from \$3.00 to \$5.35 per day. The farmers are paying \$2.00 with meals. I traveled through Mexico visiting all the principal towns from El Paso to Mexico City and made inquiries everywhere in regard to the cost of living down there. For the food, clothing and other things used by the better class, the cost is a little higher than in America, especially if they buy the best quality of food or clothing. For the laboring people, the peons, who eat the cheaper and more simple foods and wear work clothes which are made in Mexico, the cost of living is but little if any lower than it is in our country. As long as we offer the Mexican laborers much better pay than they can get at home they will continue to come here. It is not the scarcity of employment which is sending them from their homeland but the low wages and high cost of living.

During my trip I found but little idle labor in Mexico and that country has only just begun to reëstablish her industries. That fruitful country can

not be fully prosperous and busy without her laborers. Mexico must begin to offer more effective competition to the demand for workers in the border states by materially increasing the wages of all her workers. The new Mexican government recognizes this obligation and wages will go up. Many American business men and employers have stated that wages for laborers in the southwest must come down. There is little likelihood of this for we need these Mexican laborers and must compete with their native land for them. American employers may be compelled to offer better competition in the future in the way of wages than they are giving now.

During the European war the provisions of the immigration law relating to the eight dollar head tax, the literacy test and contract labor were waived by this government for Mexican laborers needed in the beet fields and other agricultural work, for government construction work and for maintenance-of-way work on the railroads. These exceptions were discontinued December 31, 1919, and resumed by departmental order on February 19, 1920. At the present time these exceptions do not apply to construction or railroad work. The exceptions as to work in the beet fields are limited to certain states where this industry is most extensive.

In considering any statistics on immigration from Mexico it is necessary to remember that the boundary line is a long one, that immigration stations are far apart and that the consul fee of ten dollars for viséing a passport superimposed upon an eight dollar head tax provides a considerable incentive to unlawful entry to this country. Thousands do get across who have never seen an immigration station or one of the officials. This is admitted by the officials and is so stated in the

report of this department. One agent said he believed that 60,000 Mexicans crossed surreptitiously over the border which is included in his territory.

In 1915, or during the latter part of the revolutionary period, there were 65,248 admissions, statistical and non-statistical (the statistical are those who declare their intention of remaining longer than the six months period). Of these 4,273 were refused admission. In the year ending June 30, 1919, or during the period just before Mexico became peaceful, there were 105,078 admissions and the percentage of rejections was 3.55. During the next year, 1920, there was a total of 142,119 Mexicans who crossed our border and the percentage of rejections was only 2.86, which probably indicates a better class of immigrants or Mexicans in better condition physically and financially due to better conditions at home.

An analysis of the cause for excluding 2.86 per cent shows that only twenty-six were refused admission because of tuberculosis and yet a limited study I made while in Mexico would indicate considerable tuberculosis among the Mexicans. Tuberculosis is quite common among the Mexicans who live in the communities along the border and among those who work in the fields and mines. Six hundred and twenty-one were excluded because they were illiterate and 1,842 because they were likely to become a public charge. Only 555 were excluded because they could not pay the eight dollar head tax. This number does not represent the true situation as regards the effect of this tax upon immigration from Mexico. The small number recorded as excluded for this cause is due to the method used at the immigration stations and not to the small percentage of penniless aliens coming north. If applicants for admission do not have eight dollars they are told to return

across the line. They go back among their friends and most of them soon return with the money. Only those who return to say that they still do not have the money are recorded as having been refused entry.

The greatest number of these immigrants go to the states of Arizona and Texas. Only 203 for 1920 went to New Mexico and the same number to Iowa. Some go as far east as New Jersey and as far north as Montana. El Paso is the greatest port of entry, Eagle Pass ranks second followed by Del Rio and Laredo. They come from all parts of Mexico. The American consul at Guadalajara told me that 1,000 a month were coming to him for visés this year while only 5,000 applied for all 1919. According to the consul in Torreon over 2,000 came from there this year and the consul at Chihuahua estimates that 7,500 men, women and children of the laboring class left that district each year beginning January, 1918. He says that previous to 1910 about 2,000 a year left that district for this country. He estimates that only about 50 per cent of those leaving Chihuahua for the States ever return. These figures, except for Chihuahua, are for the number of laborers only and do not include the families they generally brought along. From as far south as San Luis Potosi, I learned that 1,867 laborers applied to the consul in 1919 and during the nine months of 1920 there were 2,165. About 500 a month come from Aguas Calientes and everywhere the figures show an increase for 1920 over 1919. The return of peaceful conditions in Mexico seems to have had no effect on immigration to the United States.

Employers of the southwest still think that the Department should continue to make exceptions as regards the head tax and the literacy test for laborers coming from Mexico to do

agricultural work. At the present time the supply of these laborers seems to just about equal the demand along the border states. They are doing work which there is some justification for believing would largely remain undone if there were no Mexicans to perform it. They generally possess a great deal of endurance, and most of the employers consider them satisfactory.

Are these excepted laborers being returned to Mexico at the expiration of the period for which they were admitted according to the condition on which they were admitted, or are they remaining here having gained illegal entry? If many are remaining, of what value is the head tax and the literacy test? If they avoid being returned what percentage of them are illiterates and if the exceptions were not made what percentage of Mexican laborers would be refused entry? These exceptions may have been necessary during the war, but the wisdom for their continuance should be the subject of a careful inquiry.

During the latter part of 1917 when these exceptions were first made 475 were admitted under the exceptions; 8,445 in 1918, 10,491 in 1919 and 21,289 in 1920, or since the exceptions were made, a total of 40,700. In addition there were 9,998 admitted in 1919 for railroad work. Where are these 50,000 Mexicans now, who came in without paying the head tax or submitting to the literacy test, admitted to meet an emergency, a shortage of labor during our war? On June 30, 1920, 22,637 were still employed; 17,186 had been returned to Mexico and 10,691 who were supposed to be returned had deserted their employers and no one knows where they are now. The employer is almost powerless to return these men even if he wished to do so and the Department has too few men to assist in enforcing their return.

According to a test that was made, we are fairly safe in assuming that over 50 per cent of these 50,000 admitted under the exceptions were illiterate; that is, 25,000 were admitted who could not read or write any language. A study of 5,000 men admitted at El Paso and at Eagle Pass under these exceptions was made by the Department. This test showed that 50.7 per cent were literate at the time of entry. The enforcement of the literacy test would thus have held back about 10,000 illiterates in 1920 estimated on the basis of the departmental test. The enforcement of the head tax feature probably would have kept out very few laborers. I learned while in Mexico that those desiring to migrate have little difficulty in borrowing the extra eight dollars in order to leave work which paid fifty to seventy-five cents a day to go to work paying sometimes five dollars a day.

The head tax neither keeps out many Mexicans who desire to cross into America, nor exerts any significant influence towards keeping out an undesirable class of immigrants. The literacy test, if this feature of the law is ever fully enforced, will limit immigration from Mexico considerably provided illiterate ones do not cross the border at unguarded points and enter illegally. Better living conditions and especially better wages (there is certain to be a material increase in wages in Mexico within the next two or three years) will some day make it so difficult to get laborers to come north, that the employers will not willingly consent to any restrictions being placed upon immigration of laborers from Mexico.

The passport regulations which require the American Consuls to visé all passports of those desiring to migrate from their district has helped somewhat to keep the undesirables from

reaching this country. These consuls are able to make a more discriminating investigation in the emigrant's home town than inspectors can make, often hundreds of miles away. There is an opportunity through our consular service for this country to exercise a more effective control over immigration from Mexico if the present passport regulations are continued. If the consuls are to assist in selecting only those for

entry to this country who are physically and mentally fit, who have no criminal record and are not likely to become public charges, every consular office in Mexico must have trained investigators on its staff. The very best system organized to keep out undesirables will, however, prove ineffective unless our government puts into effect some means for policing our long border line.

The Mexican in Los Angeles from the Standpoint of the Religious Forces of the City

By G. BROMLEY OXNAM, S. T. D.
Pastor, Church of all Nations, Los Angeles

THREE are approximately 30,000 Mexicans in the city of Los Angeles, composed largely of three distinct groups: the descendants of the original settlers of California, known as "Californians" or "Spanish"; the refugee, representing the cultured classes of pre-Revolution days in Mexico; and the laborer, constituting the large majority of the Mexican population. The "Californians" have found their place in the social life and are loyal American citizens. The refugee has generally located in the better sections of the city and does not present a critical social problem, except for the occasional family which fled to America without funds. The laborer, however, presents a compelling social challenge constituting at once the most serious foreign problem in Los Angeles and the city's largest Americanization opportunity.

Large numbers of Mexicans are crossing the border at the present time, but as yet this influx has not materially affected the Los Angeles situation. The results, therefore, of the recent study conducted by the writer for the Interchurch World Movement will

show clearly the social conditions prevailing among the Mexicans, with which the religious forces of the city must deal in building a new program that seeks the complete transformation of the community life.

This study showed that while real improvement has been made in the reduction of the number of one and two-room dwellings during the last eight years, 28 per cent of the Mexican habitations have no sinks, 32 per cent have no lavatories, and 79 per cent have no bathtubs. The condition of these houses is classified as follows: Good, 5 per cent; fair, 40 per cent; poor, 45 per cent; very bad, 10 per cent. Of the houses, 60 per cent are of frame construction, while 5 per cent are of brick, and 35 per cent are shacks. The worst conditions obtain in the house courts. A house court generally consists of two rows of houses built on a small lot, often with a shorter row of houses between the two at the rear end of the lot. The houses are constructed of rough 1 x 12 ft. pine boards with battened cracks. Thin partitions of similar construction separate the habitations, which consist of two rooms—